



Have Diabetes. Will Travel.

Heading out of town? Leaving your troubles behind? Off on an important business trip? Whenever you travel, your diabetes comes along with you. And while having diabetes shouldn't stop you from traveling in style, you *will* have to do some careful planning. Here are some diabetes travel tips from the National Diabetes Education Program.

Plan ahead. Make sure you:

- ✓ Get all your immunizations. Find out what's required for where you're going, and make sure you get the right shots, on time.
- ✓ Control your **ABCs**: **A**1C, **B**lood pressure, and **C**holesterol. See your health care provider for a check-up four to six weeks before your trip to make sure your ABCs are under control and in a healthy range before you leave.
- ✓ Ask your health care provider for a prescription and a letter explaining your diabetes medications, supplies and any allergies. Carry this with you at all times on your trip. The prescription should be for insulin or diabetes medications and could help in case of emergency.
- ✓ Have wearable diabetes identification in the languages of the places you are going to visit.
- ✓ Plan for time zone changes. Make sure you'll always know when to take your diabetes medicine, no matter where you are. Remember: eastward travel means a shorter day. If you inject insulin, less may be needed. Westward travel means a longer day, so more insulin may be needed.
- ✓ Find out how long the flight will be and whether meals will be served.

Pack properly.

- ✓ Take double the amount of diabetes medication and supplies that you'd normally need. Better safe than sorry.
- ✓ Keep your insulin cool by packing it in insulated bag with blue ice.
- ✓ Keep snacks, glucose gel or tablets with you in case your blood glucose drops.
- ✓ If you use insulin, make sure you also pack a glucagon kit.
- ✓ Make sure you keep your medical insurance card and medical insurance emergency number handy.
- ✓ Don't forget to pack a first aid kit with all the essentials.

Some things to keep in mind if you are flying.

- ✓ Plan to carry all your diabetes supplies in your carry-on luggage. Don't risk a lost suitcase.
- ✓ Have all syringes and insulin delivery systems including the vials of insulin clearly marked with the professional pharmaceutical preprinted label which clearly identifies the medications. The FAA recommends that patients refrain from discarding their insulin box and come prepared with their vial of insulin and glucagon in its original pharmacy labeled box.

- ✓ Keep your diabetes medications and emergency snacks with you at your seat -- don't store them in an overhead bin.
- ✓ If the airline offers a meal for your flight call ahead for a diabetic, low fat or low cholesterol meal.
- ✓ Wait until your food about to be served before you take your shot. Otherwise, a delay in the meal could lead to low blood glucose.
- ✓ If no food is offered on your flight bring a meal on board yourself.
- ✓ If you plan on using the restroom for insulin injections, ask for an aisle seat for easier access.
- ✓ Don't be shy about telling the flight attendant that you have diabetes -- especially if you are traveling alone.
- ✓ When drawing up your dose of insulin don't inject air into the bottle (the air on your plane will probably be pressurized).
- ✓ Because prescription laws may be very different in other countries, write for a list of International Diabetes Federation groups: IDF, 1 rue Defaeqz, B-1000, Belgium or visit www.idf.org. You may also want to get a list of English-speaking foreign doctors in case of an emergency. Contact the American Consulate, American Express, or local medical schools for a list of doctors.
- ✓ Insulin in foreign countries comes in different strengths. If you purchase insulin in a foreign country, be sure to use the right syringe for the strength. An incorrect syringe may cause you to take too much or too little insulin.

Some things to keep in mind on a road trip

- ✓ Don't leave your medications in the trunk, glove compartment or near a window - it might overheat.
- ✓ Bring extra food with you in the car in case you can't find a restaurant.

General traveling tips.

- ✓ Stay comfortable and reduce your risk for blood clots by moving around every hour or two.
- ✓ Always tell at least one person traveling with you about your diabetes.
- ✓ Protect your feet. Never go barefoot in the shower or pool.
- ✓ Check your blood glucose often. Changes in diet, activity, and time zones can affect your blood glucose go in unexpected ways..

You may not be able to leave your diabetes behind but you can control it and have a relaxing, safe trip. To learn more about controlling your diabetes, visit the National Diabetes Education Program at www.ndep.nih.gov.